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President:	Mr. DeLaurentis	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Stancanelli
	Australia	Mr. Lumb
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Sharifov
	China	Mr. Xie Jifeng
	France	Mr. Cabouat
	Guatemala	Ms. Bolaños Pérez
	Luxembourg	Mr. Flies
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	Russian Federation	Ms. Taratukhina
	Rwanda	Ms. Nzeyimana
	Togo	Mrs. Balli
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Jobbins

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Protection of journalists

Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/393)

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Uganda to participate in this meeting.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I was recently interviewed by Swiss journalist Patrick Vallélian. The interview would not have taken place if the journalist in question had not been extremely lucky. Indeed, he miraculously survived an incident in Homs last year. If one believes his story, the incident was nothing less than a trap. His French colleague, Gilles Jacquier, however, was killed in the same incident.

That is but one example among many that demonstrate that around the world journalists face threats, assaults, abductions, disappearances and even murder. A worldwide increase in murders and imprisonment of journalists has been noted during the past few years.

Switzerland recalls that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict are civilians and should not be taken for targets unless they are directly participating in hostilities. We also recall resolution 1738 (2006), which calls on States to prevent attacks on journalists and emphasizes the importance of protective legal instruments such as the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.

Impunity, often a result of the political impact of the work of journalists, can be seen as one of the major causes of repeated attacks on them. And the media cannot be free if journalists are deliberately targeted or if those who attack them go unpunished.

That is why I thank the United States for organizing today's debate. Without freedom of opinion and expression there can be neither democracy nor good governance. Moreover, during armed conflicts, reliable and independent information is essential for the international community to play its role. The work of journalists can, for example, make an important contribution to gathering information on violations of international law. In that way, representatives of the media play a non-negligible role in preventing such violations and participate in the fight against the impunity of their perpetrators.

As long as journalists continue to be harassed or even killed because of their work, freedom of the media will remain but an empty promise. Not only do journalists have the right to be protected, but the acts of violence against them must be promptly, impartially and effectively investigated.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, I would like to express my congratulations to the United States on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

My delegation welcomes the timely convening of today's open debate. We are particularly alarmed that in 2012 alone, 121 journalists were killed and hundreds of others targeted and imprisoned. In fact, Malaysia too lost a journalist in Somalia last year. We are also concerned over reports that journalists were being targeted and killed while covering events in Gaza during Israel's attacks under Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012, as described in recent testimony to the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. In 2012, 147 violations against journalists were reported.

Journalists are civilians and must be protected in times of conflict, in accordance with international law. My delegation also agrees that the perpetrators of violence against journalists in conflict situations, such as kidnappings, torture and murder, must be held accountable and brought to justice. There can be no impunity whatsoever.

While recognizing the need to enhance protection for journalists, we must also recognize that journalists are unique. Their uniqueness stems from the nature of their job, which is to report on a particular situation. More often than not, the greater the risk, the higher the demand for the journalist to report on what is taking place on the ground. In general, we can say that the job of a journalist often finds the person in precarious situations. The more danger he or she faces, the more

credible the story is supposed to be. Because of that, the protection of journalists presents a greater challenge, as opposed to protecting other civilians.

Malaysia believes that the main responsibility to protect journalists lies with the States. States are responsible for ensuring the safety of journalists and should accord protection to them in conflict areas to the fullest extent of the law. In that regard, my delegation calls for strict adherence to resolutions 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009), as well as the relevant international law, including humanitarian and human rights laws, in the protection of civilians.

My delegation shares the views reflected in the 2012 United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as prepared by UNESCO. We are appalled at the findings that there is an increasing trend of targeted killing of journalists worldwide. We condemn the acts of violence that cost the lives of 372 journalists between 2006 and 2011. Again, Malaysia believes that impunity must end and that the acts of violence committed against civilians, including journalists, must cease. My delegation agrees that the United Nations has an important role to play in combating impunity, as reflected in the Plan of Action. Such measures would include enhancing coordination amongUnited Nations agencies on the ground in addressing the issue of the safety of journalists.

The advancement of information and communications technology could play an important part in improving protection for journalists. We are now accustomed to live visual feeds connected via satellite links from conflict areas which bring home important developments across the globe. The same technology could greatly enhance the safety and security of journalists by allowing them to report on the situation on the ground without actually being close to the conflict zone.

Malaysia neither disputes nor questions the important role of journalists in the dissemination of information in armed conflicts. The protection of journalists requires the involvement of States and the media industry and a better understanding of the role of the journalist. Journalists are a vital tool for supporting economic progress, the development of political consciousness and the intellectual growth of societies. We call on Member States to uphold the highest standards of adherence to international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in order to protect journalists.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): Let me join other delegations in congratulating you and your country, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We sincerely hope we shall be able to support you.

At the outset, let me reiterate the importance that Botswana attaches to the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. For that reason, we have consistently called on the international community to act in tandem to prevent the systematic and sometimes institutionalized attempts to prevent journalists from conducting their noble profession.

We further believe that there should be growing commitment on the part of the international community to implement the ideals espoused in international human rights law and humanitarian law. Such efforts should be tailored to complement national systems aimed at protecting the human rights of those who are not party to conflict. My delegation welcomes the Security Council's continued focus on this important topic, particularly as it takes place against the backdrop of ongoing and erupting conflicts around the world.

Botswana notes with concern that in their quest to provide the international community with valuable information, journalists often face arbitrary arrests, brutal harassment and even murder.

Journalists are by their nature data collectors, record keepers, information specialists and preservers of knowledge, whether in times of war or in times of peace. Their role is to record events as they unfold, analyse them and share them with the international community or with the public. It is therefore deeply regrettable that, despite calls by the international community to respect the rights of journalists, there are reports of escalating and widespread violations against those working in conflict situations. Such atrocities are often committed by those who perceive journalists not as stakeholders in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but as irritants and unwelcome witnesses. Thus perpetrators wish journalists could abort their noble mission, primarily because they want their blatant abuse of human rights hidden from the outside world.

It is our conviction that the existing international legal frameworks provide a realistic basis for the protection of journalists in conflict situations. We

therefore call on all warring factions across the world, irrespective of their character and formation, to abide by those normative frameworks.

We also wish to point out that while opposing parties in times of war have a responsibility to ensure the protection of journalists, it however remains the primary responsibility of States to put in place measures to respect and protect journalists. That should be done by enacting and aggressively enforcing laws that punish serious violations of human rights, as set out in the Hague Convention and the Geneva Conventions, as well as in their Additional Protocols.

Having said that, it is our belief that prior to unleashing journalists into conflict zones, media institutions should provide the necessary counselling for journalists to enable them to confront extreme situations. Such counselling should also be provided to their families and other support structures so that they may cope with unfriendly situations.

Botswana calls for cooperation among States, the Security Council and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to hold States accountable for the protection of journalists, whether in times of conflict or in times of peace. The Security Council can also do its part, perhaps more vigorously, in referring all situations that threaten international peace and security to the ICC as the only Court that can open investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo, of the United States of America, as President of the Security Council, for the invitation to participate in this open debate and for giving us an opportunity to share the comments of the Government of Colombia with regard to the protection of journalists.

The Government of Colombia promotes and protects the freedom of the press. As President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón — who is a journalist by profession — has said on several occasions, journalists in Colombia can rest assured that the Colombian Government has arranged all the measures necessary to promote and protect, at all costs, the freedom and independence of their selfless work without exception, to the extent that, as he reaffirmed, criticism from the press, far from antagonizing us, serves to encourage self-evaluation, self-reflection and the continued improvement of the Government.

Colombia shares the concern expressed in various Security Council statements with regard to violence against journalists. Journalists covering armed conflicts exercise the fundamental right of providing citizens with necessary information when crises turn violent, which in turn leads to conflicts and lends even more urgency to journalists' work. In that context, Colombia sees the Security Council's interest in those matters as a contribution to the specialized work being carried out in other forums that have the competence to speak and act on such matters, such as the Human Rights Council, the special rapporteurs and UNESCO.

My country considers it extremely important that the bodies of the United Nations system, in their spheres of competence and in accordance with their mandates under the Charter, be fully familiar with the work of national Governments in the field of the protection of civilians when establishing priorities for their own work and when informing the Organization on the respective situations.

Colombia sees the freedom of speech and of the communications media as a pillar of the democratic system. In that line of thinking, and given the challenges faced in a conflict environment, such as that experienced in Colombia with its many violent factors, the Colombian State decided to afford special treatment to journalists, bearing in mind the threats they could face. That special treatment is based upon article 20 of Colombia's Constitution, which states that every person is guaranteed the freedom to express and disseminate their thoughts and opinions, to inform and receive truthful and impartial information and to establish mass communications media.

In 2010, Colombia also enacted Act 1426, by which it established measures with regard to criminal actions against the rights of legally protected groups of human rights defenders and journalists. More recently, the National Protection Unit was established, under the Ministry of the Interior, to unify the State's frameworks to protect civilians in order to provide security to judges, prosecutors, human rights defenders and journalists, among other vulnerable groups.

With that conviction, the Colombian Government supports and vehemently defends the right to freedom of speech in all its forms. Colombia believes that the important role played by the United Nations to

identify national deficiencies and challenges should be accompanied by a recognition of the progress achieved in each country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mr. Spinellis (Greece): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to organize this important debate. I also welcome the remarks made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson, on the issue.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Endangering or taking the life of journalists is an extreme form of censorship, not only because it silences one voice, but because it aims, and usually succeeds, at intimidating others. It therefore remains a highly problematic issue. According to reports and live testimonies by journalists and the representatives of non-governmental organizations who are in the Chamber with us today, the number of journalists or press operatives killed, kidnapped, wounded or threatened while carrying out their professional duties remains alarmingly high.

In most cases, the root cause of the targeting of journalists remains the fact that they report on unsettling truths and expose crimes, the perpetrators of which — whether political autocrats, criminal organizations or terrorist groups — have something to lose when a journalist brings their illegal actions into the forefront. States do indeed have the instruments necessary to protect journalists in armed conflicts. Both resolution 1738 (2006) and the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I contain unequivocal provisions on the obligation to protect media professionals reporting in dangerous situations.

More recently, a third tool has been added — the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which is a comprehensive and practical approach to the issues of the safety of journalists and impunity. Strong support for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as for the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is essential to ensuring full implementation of the principles and objectives of the Plan of Action. And enhancing the United Nations reporting mechanism is essential to the effective protection of journalists.

Combating impunity will undoubtedly reduce the unusually high numbers of deaths, abductions and detentions. Insufficient investigation, too few convictions and simple impunity perpetuate the cycle of violence against journalists. The problem of impunity is not limited to failure to investigate murders of journalists, but also directly targets freedom of expression. Curtailing journalists' freedom of expression deprives society as a whole of their contribution and damages press freedom even more, since a climate of fear results in self-censorship. States must ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are brought to justice and punished for their actions.

Beyond that of States, the role of civil society in the protection of journalists is crucial. Several non-governmental organizations are dedicated to combating attacks on journalists and preventing violence against them. Greece attaches great importance to the issue of the protection of journalists and the fight against impunity. To that end, and in cooperation with UNESCO and Costa Rica, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day in May we organized a side event on the protection of journalists for the second consecutive year. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and one that should be universally guaranteed. Journalists and media professionals are the main actors in the process of the delivery of news and information.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Sarkowicz (Poland): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by thanking you and the delegation of the United States for your initiative in organizing this important debate on the safety of journalists. Poland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union on behalf of its member States.

Let me add just a few remarks. Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democratic societies. It is crucial to the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and good governance. Although affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is being violated as we speak, often because the safety of journalists, who seek, receive and transmit information, is in danger.

Press and media coverage is beneficial to all. Journalists play a key role in the democratic process; they are the eyes and voices of civil society. They are a check on Governments and monitor those Governments' deliverables. Citizen journalism has contributed greatly to the political changes in Tunisia and Libya. Journalism still gives hope to people who struggle under undemocratic regimes, and it alerts the international community.

The protection of journalists should cover all news providers, professional and non-professional, as well as journalists' sources, and should exist in time of peace as well as conflict. Recognizing the importance of freedom of expression for the process of democratization and journalists' key role in it, Poland has consistently raised the issue of journalists' safety on the international stage. We support activities that promote freedom of expression and raise awareness of the significance of a free media environment. In an effort to share our experience from our own transition period, we organize lessons-learned workshops on democracy for journalists, one of which was held in Myanmar last year. Since 2011, we have organized, with Poland's Reporters Foundation, the Eastern Partnership Journalism Prize contest, which sends a clear signal that journalists' work is appreciated and noticed.

We are happy that 2012 bore so much fruit in the form of commitments aimed at strengthening the safety of journalists. The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, the guidebook on the subject issued by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and, lastly, the Human Rights Council's resolution 21/12 on the safety of journalists have been very useful.

Poland continues to work on international standards and on further improving guarantees of reporters' safety. In April of this year the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the embassies of Austria and Switzerland, organized an international conference in Warsaw on the safety of journalists. Among the participants were representatives of the State, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, along with journalists and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Participants discussed specific recommendations and exchanged views on the legal framework for the protection of journalists, the security of investigative journalists and best practices. The recommendations were subsequently submitted to the Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and the OSCE and yesterday were also sent to every United Nations mission in New York.

The challenge here is to further promote and enhance respect for international standards in this area. Journalists should be protected from threats to their security. More must be done to address the root causes of violence against them. Preventive mechanisms must be discussed and formulated. We should not hesitate to ask questions about the most serious threats to the safety of journalists, the existence of common threat patterns, successful solutions and how we can ensure respect for international obligations. And we should do our utmost to find the answers.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): I would like to begin by aligning myself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

Journalists, including bloggers, are still all too often the targets of aggression, harassment, arbitrary detention and even extrajudicial killings. The adoption of resolution 1738 (2006), though an important step, has not put an end to attacks on reporters, so more must be done. This open debate will be instrumental to that, in our view, and I would therefore like to thank you, Mr. President, and through you to commend the United States delegation for organizing this important event.

The role of journalists before, during and after conflict is indispensable. The very fact that they are intentionally being targeted testifies to that. The media play an important role in preventing conflict by ensuring that their reporting separates facts and tangible realities from assumptions and spin. And after a conflict has broken out, the media also have a responsibility to provide a reliable account of what is really going on. Their stories and images show what is actually happening, which can help a community to understand the conflict that is taking place. Real insight may also help to generate international commitment to conflict resolution.

Resolution 1738 (2006) summed it up well. Intentional acts of violence against journalists are unacceptable and should be condemned and prosecuted by the authorities, because attacks on the media have the sole and illegitimate purpose of curtailing freedom of expression, and through that the people's voices. And we need more voices to be heard, not fewer. Thanks

to the advent of the Internet, that is exactly what is currently happening. Everyone can now reach large audiences with their story or footage. Citizen journalism has become an important source of information during conflict and real-time images often have enormous impact, which also makes them an attractive instrument for manipulation for some.

The Netherlands has therefore decided to encourage new forms of journalism and to contribute to the protection of its messengers. We provide such encouragement by financially supporting the development of the StoryMaker application. This application enables citizen and professional journalists in conflict areas to immediately tell and share their stories by mobile phone with millions of people around the world without endangering their online privacy and security. The application also includes an interactive training guide on independent and safe reporting. It is available for free and can be downloaded through www.storymaker.cc.

We are promoting our second priority, protection, by establishing the Freedom Online Coalition. This cross-regional coalition, now numbering 21 countries, was set up in 2011 and is committed to respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms offline and online alike. As a part of that, several members of the Freedom Online Coalition have set up the Digital Defenders Partnership to promote innovative solutions in keeping access to the Internet open. The Partnership is also used to support journalists, bloggers and cyberactivists who find themselves under attack and to facilitate deployment of emergency Internet access in countries where the Internet is not accessible.

These are just two examples of concrete action to protect the freedom of expression and its messengers. But more still needs to be done. The Netherlands looks forward to collaborating with the members of the Council to ensure better protection for the courageous journalists who help to ensure that the truth is not the first casualty in conflict situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for the initiative to convene this very important meeting. Impartial media work plays an important role in increasing the understanding among peoples and nations, and it is of great importance for humankind.

Today, an armed group killed Mr. Mohammad Jamous in southern Lebanon as he was returning home. He was accompanied by his 17 year-old daughter. This armed terrorist group is receiving military and financial support from States and Governments that are assisting terrorist groups in my country. Lamentably, this honourable man died even as we participate in this very important meeting.

The Syrian Government has been working to treat the media openly throughout the events occurring in Syria. We have adopted a reformed media law to promote the work of the media and guarantee greater freedom and transparency. The Syrian Government is working to ensure that the truth and facts emerge. We worked with United Nations Special Envoy Kofi Annan to establish his six-point plan, including its fifth point on media access and work. The Syrian Government periodically gave Mr. Annan a list of the names of journalists who have access to Syria. Those journalists numbered 160 in the Arab and foreign media, from 25 March 2012 to 21 April 2013. According to the Ministry of Information, access has been given to 300 members of the media from around the world, and we have enabled all of them to work freely.

The Syrian Government attaches particular importance to the security and safety of journalists. We have urged them not to enter Syrian territory illegally, as that would expose them to danger. We have also urged them to avoid areas where armed terrorist groups, including Al-Nusra, gather.

Unfortunately, terrorist groups have targeted foreign journalists as well as Syrians. They have been killed, assassinated and abducted. Mr. Richard Engel, for instance, was himself abducted by a terrorist group. We had hoped that Mr. Engel would reveal the identity of those hostage-takers, which might have helped the Council to understand in greater detail what is happening in Syria. Two French journalists are still being held captive by terrorist groups. Unfortunately, we have lost other journalists, including Gilles Jacquier, who was assassinated by terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government has striven to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in seeking to ensure the freedom of these abducted journalists, as well as the return to their home countries of the remains of journalists who have been killed.

Some journalists are infiltrating Syrian territory through common borders with neighbouring countries. This is illegal and is being carried out with terrorist assistance. Accordingly, some of those journalists have been exposed to danger or have been arrested then freed to return home. On behalf of my Government, I have sent official letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council containing information about some journalists who have illegally entered Syrian territory. In those letters, we confirm that those journalists alone bear the legal responsibility for any consequences ensuing from their illegal accessing of Syrian territory.

Some Governments are seeking to promote their geopolitical objectives, destroy the Syrian State and undermine its infrastructure and national institutions. A vigorous media campaign has been mobilized to incite violence and terrorist, spread lies, distort the situation and fuel divisions within Syria. This is a flagrant violation of resolution 1624 (2005). The Council cannot be unaware that that resolution was adopted with the aim of ending incitement to terrorism.

In that context, Syrian media were placed on a targeted list in an effort to muzzle them. Journalists and media professionals have been threatened to prevent them from carrying out their task of disseminating the truth. When those efforts failed, some media officials were abducted and assassinated. Furthermore, a number media institutions were the targets of terrorist attacks and destroyed, including the offices of a satellite channel, which were attacked on 27 June 2012, their premises looted, four security guards killed and three journalists executed in cold blood. Other buildings were targeted on 6 August 2012 with explosives.

We arrested the perpetrator of that terrorist attack, who has admitted that he received his instructions from Saudi Arabia. The toll of the attack was nine journalists killed. Twenty-three Syrian and 39 foreign journalists have been abducted by a terrorist group.

This media war has not stopped there. It has been carried on by an embargo imposed on the Syrian media through a resolution adopted by the League of Arab States on 2 June 2012 to stop the broadcasting of certain satellite channels on Nilesat, Arabsat, and the European Hotbird channel.

Despite the ferocious campaign against Syria, many courageous, honourable and professional journalists have contributed to raising public awareness of the reality of the situation in Syria and exposed terrorist attacks perpetrated by extremist groups, including foreign extremists and mercenaries who came to Syria to spread chaos and destruction at the behest of certain countries that are known to all.

The Taliban movement in Pakistan has announced that hundreds of these elements have participated in clashes against Syrian forces at the request of so-called Arab friends, who have also provided help in Afghanistan. Many honourable journalists have taken noble positions and have resigned from the chain that is promoting division and inciting hatred and carnage in Syria, Egypt and in other countries. These resignations have played a very important role in revealing the destructive approach adopted by some media that have failed to respect the values and objectives of noble media workers.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): I should like to thank the United States presidency for organizing this debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations under the theme of the protection of civilians. I should also like to thank the presidency for the concept paper on the subject (S/2013/393, annex). We have benefited greatly from the briefings given today by the Deputy Secretary-General and other briefers.

Before making our observations on this subject, we would reiterate India's consistent view that the protection of journalists in all situations is the foremost responsibility of every State. In India, articles 19 and 21 of our Constitution guarantee the right to life, personal liberty, freedom of speech and expression. Such constitutional rights are of fundamental importance in any democratic society. Journalists play a crucial role in ensuring that citizens exercise these rights in reality. As the world's most populous democracy, India is committed to the protection of these rights for all its citizens, including journalists.

Our ingrained awareness of these rights is an integral part of our participation in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, to which India has been the largest contributor. Indian United Nations peacekeepers have helped to restore peace and security in conflict situations around the globe and thereby facilitated the creation of an environment conducive to the exercise of the right to freedom of speech and expression.

Since 1950, India has adhered to and fully supported the Geneva Conventions. We also recall the Council's demand in resolution 1738 (2006) that all parties to armed conflict comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel. Such compliance is necessary not only for access to information, but also for the resolution of conflict situations and for post-conflict peacebuilding.

While discussing best practices for protecting journalists in conflict situations, we would recommend certain basic precautions. These recommendations are meant to put in context issues of access and security in conflict situations. First and foremost, journalists should function within the relevant domestic laws of the countries concerned so that they have full recourse to the protection afforded by such laws to them. Secondly, their access to conflict zones should be secured in a legal manner. Thirdly, they should maintain strict neutrality and impartiality and not become a party to the conflict. When journalists follow such precautions, it will become easier for States to protect them, facilitate their professional work, and ensure that they become a catalyst for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. For their part, national Governments must come together and pledge to provide protection to journalists in conflict situations, especially where their whereabouts and coordinates have been provided in advance.

We have witnessed the tremendous dynamism and professionalism of journalists in reporting from conflict situations. Many journalists, including women, have performed their professional duties at grave personal risk. The protection that these journalists have received from responsive mechanisms, established by States under the rule of law, demonstrates the need to further support the development of such mechanisms. The efforts of the Council and of the international community must be directed at assisting national authorities in augmenting such mechanisms, and in generating greater awareness of these issues. That is the most sustainable method for sovereign Governments to discharge their responsibility to protect journalists in conflict situations.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, is undoubtedly a subject of major importance. I therefore welcome the inspired decision of the United States presidency to bring this issue to our attention in order to further spur salutary action to better protect rights and freedoms throughout the world.

First, I should like to congratulate the United States presidency on its excellent conduct of the Security Council's work in July, and reiterate my delegation's ongoing readiness to support it in the discharge of its responsibilities. I should also like to express my full gratitude to Mr. Jan Eliasson for his briefing today and to all those who kindly agreed to share with us their views and experiences on this topic.

The protection of journalists in armed conflicts is an increasingly pressing issue, according to the 2012 report of the UNESCO Director-General, Ms. Irina Bakova. Indeed, with 600 deaths over the past decade, including 121 in 2012 alone, the situation of journalists, staff and freelance alike, is going from bad to worse. Media professionals continue to be subject to the most unacceptable treatment, such as abductions, intimidation, illegal arrests, harassment or rape, in flagrant violation of article 79 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. I therefore take this opportunity to pay a strong tribute to all those martyrs whose sacrifices attest to the importance of our responsibility.

The international community's response to such practices should be commensurate with the threat they represent to international security and to fundamental freedoms. Media professionals play a crucial role in bringing the truth to light in times of armed conflict. They make a considerable contribution to raising awareness among the international community about the full extent of the security situation and the underlying causes of insecurity.

Whatever the nature, sensitivity and issues at stake, the information that is relayed and dealt with by the press cannot excuse the reprisals that take place, often going as far as killings. We must therefore establish an inclusive approach to strengthen protection for press workers and, above all, to ensure accountability for perpetrators of such abuses or those who provoke them. Such persons must be identified and punished with the full force of the law. I am pleased in this regard to commend the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity,

which is aimed at ensuring the ideal of a free and safe environment for media workers.

The Plan of Action's relevance resides in its vision of the role of the press in maintaining global peace and the modus operandi that should lead to achieving it through the invaluable contribution of United Nations agencies, Member States and non-governmental organizations. We are therefore pleased to note that the Plan of Action promotes the strengthening of the mechanisms of the United Nations system, cooperation with States, the development of partnerships with other international institutions and organizations, including non-governmental organizations, and awareness-raising in order to end the targeting of journalists.

This mission is of course very complex, given the risks facing journalism in times of conflict, but we must make this noble fight a priority concern. With that in mind, we should help Governments in need to establish the legal and institutional instruments that will enable them to pursue perpetrators of acts of violence against journalists. Such cooperation with Governments is all the more important in that, as the report of the UNESCO Director-General shows, out of the 29 countries on the 2009-2010 list of murdered journalists, only 18 responded to UNESCO's call. The report also informs us of the low rate of convictions. Only nine cases out of 245 killings perpetrated between 2006 and 2009 led to convictions and punishment.

This range of measures to strengthen security for journalists should also include the cooperation of media professionals to prevent or limit the dangers they face. It should be fully understood that my delegation in no way advocates self-censorship; this is simply a question of not uselessly inviting what could be perceived in a difficult situation as a provocation without compromising fundamental tenets. I welcome the drafting of a charter on security for journalists in areas of conflict where they are working in areas of war.

The Security Council should also strengthen action to protect journalists in conformity with the spirit of resolution 1738 (2006). In this context, it would be useful to provide United Nations peacekeeping missions with the necessary human, technical and legal capacities to protect journalists.

Lastly, I should like to encourage the Council in the dynamic already under way, which requires the international community as a whole to take decisive action commensurate with the challenge that journalists face in times of conflict. I therefore reiterate my country's commitment to contributing to freedom of information, including in times of conflict.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Červenka (Czech Republic): Let me start by thanking the United States presidency for scheduling this important debate, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his dedication to the protection of journalists, and the media representatives for their moving briefings. The Czech Republic aligns itself with the earlier statement made by the European Union.

Journalists and other media workers play an essential role in informing the public and the international community about current events, both in conflict and in non-conflict situations. The Czech Republic is therefore deeply worried about continuing restrictions of free expression and independent journalism by State and non-State actors in some countries, as well as by escalating trends of harassment, arrests, torture and the persecution of journalists worldwide.

The protection of journalists in armed conflict is of vital importance in order to ensure their safety as well as the freedom of information. We therefore highly value the recent efforts of the Human Rights Council in this regard, especially the adoption of resolution 21/12 on the safety of journalists in September 2012, which the Czech Republic co-sponsored. Furthermore, we commend the progress achieved by UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in this area.

In recent years, we have witnessed unprecedented violence against journalists in some countries, especially in the Middle East and northern Africa. By the end of 2012, attacks on journalists in these countries escalated significantly, making Syria in particular one of the most dangerous places in the world. Unfortunately, this negative trend continues in 2013. Violent attacks on journalists indicate a serious deterioration of the freedom of expression in the region and highlight violations of the right to publish and exchange information and views.

In this context, the Czech Republic believes that it is absolutely crucial for United Nations Member States to respect and ensure respect for the applicable rules of the international humanitarian law on the protection of

journalists. Article 79, the key provision of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, clearly sets out that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians, and that they shall be protected. The Council itself unanimously stressed this principle in its landmark resolution 1738 (2006), recently recalled in the presidential statement of 12 February (S/PRST/2013/2).

In conclusion, the Czech Republic would like to take this opportunity to recognize, honour, and underscore the essential role of independent media and civil society in protecting freedom of expression and democratic principles. I should like to pay tribute to the work of all fearless journalists who dedicate their lives, sometimes at great personal cost, to this cause. We would like to express our solidarity with all those who have lost their lives in the fight for freedom of expression and the promotion of democracy in the world.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Ms. Burgstaller (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden. At the outset, I should like to thank the United States for taking the initiative to hold an open debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflict. I should also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing and the distinguished journalists for sharing their valuable insights and experiences with us today.

The Nordic countries greatly value the crucial role of journalists in enhancing the international community's understanding of conflict areas, and we are deeply committed to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, including the protection of journalists. The work of journalists in armed conflict — witnessing and reporting on violations and abuses of human rights and violations of humanitarian law — is in the international public interest. The presence of journalists often helps to prevent atrocities being committed. Yet, many journalists and media workers are persecuted during armed conflicts precisely because of their work. It is often said that truth is the first casualty of war; this sometimes translates into a deliberate targeting of journalists.

In light of the worsening situation over the past decade, the Nordic countries very much welcome the creation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, led by UNESCO and aiming at securing greater cooperation among United Nations organizations, Member States and other stakeholders in supporting the creation of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in conflict and non-conflict situations. We particularly appreciate the United Nations Plan's concrete implementation strategy for the global and national levels.

The increasing violence across the world against journalists undermines the very foundation of open and democratic societies in which freedom of expression is a cornerstone. The Nordic countries welcome the first resolution on the safety of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2012 (resolution 21/12).

Many different forms of media play a key role in the exercise, promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Journalists, like everyone else, are entitled to the same rights online as they have offline, as affirmed by the Human Rights Council in its landmark resolution 20/8, "The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet", adopted in July 2012.

We, the international community, must demand and ensure that the protection under international humanitarian law given to journalists, as recognized war correspondents and as civilians, is fully respected and upheld. The Security Council must be clear and strong in its messages and resolutions that violations against civilians and journalists cannot be tolerated. We, the international community, must also put pressure on those who fail to respect the basic yet vital rules that apply. Journalists also play a crucial role in witnessing, gathering information, and reporting on violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. This is an essential element in ensuring that such crimes do not go unpunished.

Neither should crimes against journalists themselves go unpunished. Promoting the safety of journalists and fighting impunity requires preventive actions to address the causes of violence against journalists and impunity. This encompasses the need to deal with issues such as corruption, organized crime and an effective framework for the rule of law.

At the thirty-first International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011, the States parties agreed in a resolution on a four-year action plan to enhance the protection of journalists and the

role of media workers. We must report on progress at the next Conference in 2015. Education is also needed in preventative actions and to underline causes of violence against journalists. For this purpose, we have a common responsibility to educate our armed forces on the protection of civilians and journalists under international humanitarian law and human rights law, and we must make sure that crimes against them are brought to justice.

The Nordic countries support a range of initiatives that are relevant to the topic of today's debate. Let me mention just a few. Norway, in partnership with Argentina, Austria, Indonesia and Uganda, has led a series of regional conferences on the theme "Reclaiming the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law". At the final global conference held in May this year, the protection of journalists was specifically underlined in the co-Chairs' recommendations.

The Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Swedish National Defence College have produced a handbook on assisting international criminal investigations with very hands-on information to all those — including journalists — who are present in conflict environments on how to correctly identify, gather and forward information on possible international crimes to international criminal courts and tribunals.

UNESCO and Reporters Without Borders have developed a practical guide for journalists in conflict zones. Sweden, together with the Swedish Reporters Without Borders, is in the process of translating this handbook to ensure its wider distribution.

In closing, this debate today has underscored the difficult circumstances under which journalists operate, while providing the international community with vital information from conflict areas. It is our common responsibility to make sure that they can play this indispensable role without risking their own lives.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the United States presidency for convening this debate on the security of journalists in armed conflict. To me personally as a professional journalist, this subject is of particular interest, as it is for my country, which is a champion of the right of access by all to truthful, timely and verified information.

It is important to note the duty of States to protect all their citizens in any situation that puts their lives at risk as a result of criminal and delinquent activities. This protection should be for all, regardless of condition or profession. We must, however, be careful not to consider that every murder of an individual who happens to be a journalist is necessarily an infringement of the freedom of expression when in reality it may simply be a case of common crime. In every circumstance, Ecuador calls on all States not to allow the killing of journalists to go unpunished.

The specific theme of today's debate is the protection of journalists in armed conflict. This protection is defined, first and foremost, as that which international humanitarian law grants to civilians in cases of armed conflict. In that context, Ecuador condemns the deaths of all civilians and non-combatants — most certainly including journalists — as a result of collateral damage in actions not directed against military objectives, as defined by the laws of war, or in extrajudicial executions, which are illegal under international law and may even be carried these days using remote-controlled means that do not distinguish between armed combatants and civilian populations, including journalists, who must be protected in all circumstances.

A second element underpinning the need to protect journalists in armed conflicts is the right of society to have access to truthful information, and its corresponding right, that of freedom of expression. The presence of journalists in the midst of armed conflicts has helped societies to better understand the horrors of war and clearly understand who are the true aggressors and who are the people exercising their right to self-defence and self-determination.

This role of a committed, independent and truthful journalist must be protected. However, we believe it necessary to reflect on the situation of those who, in the exercise of journalistic activities, are really more the agents of propaganda, even if involuntary, of one of the Powers in conflict when they are embedded in military units that are subject to censorship behind which war crimes are often hidden. There are ethical and ontological considerations in that regard that should not be overlooked in this debate.

As on other occasions, my delegation reiterates its appeal for respect for the basic mandates of the various United Nations bodies in order to avoid ineffective duplication of effort and, above all, distortions from the

appropriate treatment that these issues deserve. While we value the attention that the Council and UNESCO are now giving to the safety of journalists, we believe that it is up to the Human Rights Council specifically, and its Special Rapporteur in general, to address the issue of journalists' safety, in particular because of the valuable tools at its disposal, including its emergency appeals and its universal periodic review mechanism.

In our view, the ever-present risk of politicizing matters related to the protection of human rights, in this case for journalists, by taking them to bodies that are eminently political, as is undoubtedly the case of the Security Council, weakens the necessary message of complete and total respect of the human rights of all human beings. At least this is our reading and our understanding; of course, there are many others. Who knows how many other readings there may be? A number of opinions have been expressed on this very same issue, and from this diversity everyone will draw their own conclusions.

That brings us to an issue that should be key and ineluctable — context. Journalists have died in my country. There were recently two disturbing cases in Ecuador. The first one, this year, involving Fausto Baldiveso, is currently being investigated. My country's prosecutor and police have detained seven suspects to date, all of whom have been linked to usury and drug trafficking in the past. The other case, of 2012, involves Juan Antonio Serrano Selgado, the brother of Ecuador's Minister of the Interior, a photojournalist who was murdered by a group of young people who had been taking drugs. According to the investigations to date, neither of those two unfortunate cases are linked to the journalistic lives of those citizens. When Ms. Kathleen Carroll read out this morning a list of countries — an incomplete one at that, without context or qualification — she was undertaking a perverse exercise that belied a lack of serious and honest journalism. At a time when that is what we are seeking today, it seems that when haste is placed before rigour, the result is politicization.

In conclusion, I cannot fail to mention that the type of indiscriminate electronic monitoring that the world's citizens have experienced in recent weeks can also jeopardize the lives of journalists and their sources, especially in situations of armed conflict. As an associated State of the Common Market of the South, Ecuador endorses the comments of the Permanent Representative of Brazil this morning with regard to the need to adopt multilateral rules governing the Internet, in order to ensure the protection communications, the privacy of individuals and respect for the sovereignty of States.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for having organizing this important meeting. We would also like to pay tribute to all journalists who have lost their lives in the context of the circumstances mentioned in the invitation to this meeting.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hopes and is working for a world of peace free of violence, which is the only real way to avoid such tragic events, So long as war persists, we will continue to regret such events. We are therefore working towards a world of justice and peace, both of which are mutually reinforcing. We need such a world so that we need not regret not just the killing of journalists, but also the loss of so many innocent lives. All death is regrettable. My statement is aimed primarily at finding ways of ensuring peace.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its support for the need to protect civilians in armed conflict, including journalists and all media personnnel. We also reiterate that responsibility to protect lies primarily with sovereign States, which need to abide by international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The best way to protect civilians, including journalists and media personnel, is through diplomacy and dialogue, not by using force. It is also the best way to attain peace. We must strive to protect civilians in armed conflict without resorting to the use of force. In that regard, the role of the United Nations must be to serve as an honest, objective, neutral and impartial mediator between the parties to a conflict, paving the path for a durable, peaceful solution. That is the only way not just to avoid the loss of innocent lives, but any loss of life. Peacekeeping operations must focus on using their political influence and their role of providing comprehensive support for parties to a conflict in the search for a peaceful solution. Peacekeeping operations must be a part of political solutions to conflicts, not an alternative to them.

In that connection, my delegation expresses its concern at the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2098 (2013), last March, which refers to the establishment of an intervention brigade responsible for neutralizing certain armed groups and reducing the threat they pose to the authority of the State and to security in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, thereby creating some scope for stabilization activities. Venezuela stands by the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also recognize the imminent need to protect civilians affected by the conflict, and we reject the atrocities committed by certain armed groups. However, we also fear that the establishment of that intervention brigade might set a negative precedent for how peacekeeping operations are carried out. For the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, it is important to emphatically reiterate that the establishment of the brigade cannot and must not, under any circumstances, set a precedent for how the Council conducts itself.

We are also deeply concerned that unmanned aerial systems — drones — are being used in the context of peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While such aircraft are currently being used to protect civilians, United Nations staff and facilities, we have very few assurances that in the near future they will not be used as instruments of war. Judging by the establishment of the intervention brigade, the trend seems to be that the protection of civilians justifies anything.

Before I conclude, I would like to clarify that when we speak of journalists and media personnel we are not just referring to the reporters and columnists of the major media conglomerates. We are also referring to all of those who from their communities or places of work reveal to the their societies and the world at large the abuses and violations that are taking place on a day to day basis.

Let us not forget to mention that, on more than a few ocassions, some information outlets appear to act as instruments for inciting violence and war. We should therefore take note of the fact that such networks are also responsible for the deaths of journalists in armed conflict; for, whether deliberately or not, they expose them to dangers for which they are not prepared.

This is therefore about journalists in general, working within their own communities and workplaces. With all due respect to them, however, reporting is not carried out just by them. We are also speaking about people such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, who, acting for truth and justice, while putting their lives in danger, have exposed the enormous reach of one of the greatest threats to international peace and security: cyberwar. Those reporters also deserve the protection of the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for her leadership in convening this open debate. I would also express my appreciation for the valuable briefings given by His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, DeputySecretary-General, Mr. Richard Engel of NBC News, Ms. Kathleen Carroll of the Associated Press and the Committee to Protect Journalists, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur of AFP and Mr. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad of The Guardian.

In 2012, the number of journalists killed globally was tragically high, totalling more than 120, a number that includes several Japanese journalists. We would like to express our sincere condolences for those who have fallen in the course of their efforts to investigate and deliver facts to all the world's people. Against that backdrop, it is both timely and meaningful that the Security Council is holding an open debate focused on the protection of journalists. It is especially important that the Council, which is responsible for international peace and security, hear directly the views of journalists who have worked in the field and who have broad experience covering active conflicts in the face of grave personal danger.

Attacks against journalists are assaults against freedom of expression. As pointed out in the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, without freedom of expression, and particularly freedom of the press, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible. In particular, without the courageous actions of journalists, the world would not know about the suffering of people during ongoing conflicts, when numerous human rights abuses and humanitarian crises occur. Protecting journalists means shedding light on suffering, informing people of the truth and contributing to improving the situation. In other words, journalists are not only defenders of freedom of expression; they also play a significant role in consolidating democracy through their reporting and contributions to the advancement of human rights.

The Geneva Conventions constitute the first legal framework for protecting journalists, one that was further developed through the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006) and the Plan of Action I just mentioned. However, we still face challenges in implementing those frameworks.

In particular, the fight against impunity, especially in terms of prevention, is of critical importance. In cases when Japanese journalists have died or been killed, the Government of Japan has requested the countries concerned to provide detailed information on each incident, and it expects justice to be done. Japan both commends and emphasizes the importance of efforts to document instances of the killing of journalists, to monitor Government responses to such acts and to publicize the outcomes, including activities undertaken by the Committee to Protect Journalists and UNESCO.

Resolution 1738 (2006) clarifies the issue of protecting journalists. However, the security conditions for journalists have yet to improve. Furthermore, we should remember that many non-conflict related cases also exist where journalists are in grave danger. The Security Council should find ways to prevent journalists from falling prey to tragic situations and further encourage good practices.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Pyvovarov (Ukraine): I would like to thank the delegation of the United States for organizing today's meeting of the Security Council, which is devoted to the important issue of protecting journalists in armed conflicts.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

We express our gratitude to Mr. Eliasson for his comprehensive briefing, as well as to the representatives from the leading media entities present here today.

No one doubts that today information directly impact the key global political processes. Over the past two years, the world witnessed a steady increase in the number of journalists killed or injured while performing their professional duties. Unfortunately, a key reason for that unacceptable situation is the increase in zones of instability, inadequate international legal mechanisms to protect journalists, the impunity of those committing crimes, the creation of obstacles to journalists' professional activities, and the state of global information campaigns.

The events of the Arab Spring, especially in Syria, and the alarming news from other countries in the region demonstrate the true price we pay for being informed of the real situation inside conflict zones. While ordinary people try to escape and save themselves from chaos and bloodshed, journalists, in contrast, attempt to reach such areas in order to provide us with the latest news. Unfortunately, their courage and professionalism sometimes cost them their lives or their health.

I would like to recall that, thanks to a successful escape attempt a few months ago, the Ukrainian journalist Anhar Kochnyeva was able to return home from captivity in Syria, where she had spent almost six months. Over the past 10 years, more than 20 Ukrainian journalists have died while performing their duties in the line of fire.

That is why, in our view, today's debate should answer the question of how the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, can contribute more effectively to protecting journalists from violence and safeguarding them from danger when working in conflict zones.

Strengthening the freedom of expression and developing a solid framework of international humanitarian law, one that would guarantee journalists the right to work in an environment free from fear of persecution and aggression, is one of the main priorities of Ukraine's 2013 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and of its vice-presidency of the United Nations Committee on Information.

Ukraine believes that free, independent, responsible and professional journalism is the basis for a modern, democratic civil society. Our country supports all international mechanisms aimed at strengthening the global protection of journalists throughout the world, in particular those promoted by the Human Rights Council. We supported the resolution adopted by the Council in September 2012 to improve the situation in this domain. Ukraine is also actively engaged in UNESCO's work to strengthen the intergovernmental response to violent and aggressive acts against journalists working in high-risk areas and danger zones.

My country strongly supports the full implementation of the principles set out in the United

Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. We consider it an important document in the global fight against the impunity of persons and criminal entities that threaten media personnel directly in conflict zones.

Strengthening the activities of professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide could also become an important part of efforts aimed at improving journalists' security in general. Such NGOs should continue to draw Governments' attention to the shortcomings of the existing physical and legal protections for media personnel. We believe that close cooperation between different governmental agencies and NGOs could provide a positive impetus, including revising the list of new areas of informational activity — for example in the blogosphere — where journalists would have the same rights as when they worked in conflict zones.

Ukraine believes that one of the most problematic aspects in protecting journalists in armed conflicts is not the absence of an international legal framework, but of specific implementation mechanisms. A case in point is the difficulty in bringing to account those responsible for acts of aggression against media representatives in conflict zones. In our view, it is also extremely important, at the level of the United Nations, to make a clear distinction between journalistic activity during armed conflicts and espionage. Unfortunately, in some States accusations of spying often serve as a legal basis to deny journalists access to conflict zones and as a reason for their illegal detention.

In that context, Ukraine is extremely alarmed by the current tendency of increasing media confrontation that could deepen the crisis of mutual confidence between States and affect some positive trends elaborated at the United Nations to protect the freedom of journalists and freedom of speech. We again stress the unacceptability of spreading manipulative and biased information, especially that obtained illegally, in order to achieve situational political benefits. Supporting and empowering journalists who are involved in covering events in conflict zones serves as an essential tool for a healthy and high-quality media environment in the world.

Ukraine strongly believes in the necessity of improving expertise aimed at upgrading the processes of investigation and making accountable those who inhibit the legitimate right of journalists to work in zones of instability.

Finally, we also pay tribute to journalists who have died or been injured when performing their professional duties. Our country will remain an active supporter of free and safe journalisms. We consider the United Nations and the Security Council instrumental actors in strengthening the basic rights and freedoms of journalists.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, oun your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We would also like to express our appreciation to the delegation of the United Kingdom, which competently led the work of the Council during the past month. We also wish to thank you, Sir, for your initiative in convening this debate. We are also grateful to Mr. Eliasson and to the journalists here today — Mr. Engel, Ms. Carroll, Mr. Abdinur and Mr. Abdul-Ahad — for their informative briefings.

As members are aware, this is not the first time that the Security Council has considered the issue of the protection of journalists. As the previous meeting on the subject was held under the Qatar's presidency during the month of December 2006 (see S/PV.5613), we are especially honoured to participate in today's meeting and to see other Member States participating as well.

Conflicting views as to what is taking place on the ground pose a major obstacle to the international community taking a positive role in resolving conflicts. That situation can be overcome only by the presence of professional, competent and qualified journalists who can convey the real story from the field. Although advances in technology and communication have enhanced the ability of individuals to communicate, the importance of journalists remains crucial to conveying the truth about situations, both in time of war and peace.

We deeply regret the fact that instances of the killing, imprisonment and abduction of journalists are rampant. In fact, they have increased during the past few years. Our region has had the largest share of such violations.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 45 journalists were killed during the past two years

in Syria alone. In addition, a large number of other journalists and media professionals have faced oppression, torture, arbitrary detention, intimidation and threats. The fact that the Syrian regime's security forces use draconian measures to suppress the freedom of information was one of the reasons for the popular uprising against that regime. In fact, that regime is still using its media as part of a campaign to mislead the world about what is taking place in Syria.

Journalists in occupied Palestine face similar serious violations, including acts of aggression by the Israeli occupation forces, all of which is being documented.

The State of Qatar has demonstrated its desire to strengthen the freedom of speech and the freedom to information, including enhancing its professionalism. We have done so based on our belief in the decisive role that information and media play in boosting knowledge and understanding in society and in fostering and entrenching those values as the cornerstone of civilization. The information sector can only perform its noble task if it is completely free and if journalists are allowed safe access to all areas, including zones of conflict.

In January 2012, the State of Qatar hosted an international conference on the theme of protecting journalists in dangerous situations, organized by the Qatari national committee for human rights, with a view to enhancing coordination and to uniting initiatives. The Doha Centre for Media Freedom has been making considerable and commendable efforts in training journalists on ways to secure their safety. This programme is named for Ali Hassan Al-Jaber, the famous Qatari photographer who was killed when covering the war in Libya in 2011.

Ensuring the protection of journalists is one of the priorities of those working to achieve peace and security throughout the world. However, we must also draw attention to such civilians working in zones of conflict, who are more vulnerable and more exposed to danger. Journalists reporing from conflict zones must act in total freedom. We also emphasize that occupation forces must respect the freedom of journalists. In order to secure their commitment to that freedom, there must be consequences for those who oppress journalists or create obstacles for them. We must not tolerate such actions. We must hold all those responsible accountable

We must look into the provisions that exist to ensure accountability for those who harm journalists. We should also consider how to give effect to article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts. We reaffirm the provisions of resolution 1738 (2006), as well as the presidential statement of 12 February 2013 (S/PRST/2013/3), concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. We hope to achieve the goals set in those documents.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this Security Council debate.

We have listened closely to a number of statements in the course of today's meeting that have served to enrich this debate on the aspects that cause journalists in armed conflict zones to be put in harm's way; the need to distinguish between journalists and activists; and the need to implement measures at the State level and within the international community to protect the lives of those individuals.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia of course endorses the language of resolution 1738 (2006), adopted in December 2012, indicating that journalists, media communications professionals and associated personnel carrying out dangerous professional activities within armed conflict zones should be considered as civilians and afforded respect and protection as such. Since the resolution was adopted, the safety of journalists in armed conflict has been a matter of concern for the Council and the entire United Nations.

Year after year, we learn that a growing number of media professionals have been killed. We have heard the Deputy Secretary-General state that 600 journalists have been killed in the past decade and that, in over 90 per cent of those cases, the perpetrators have gone unpunished.

In addition to highlighting the contributions made in today's debate, Bolivia would like to emphasize a few other points concerning the risks that journalists face and the situations that put them at risk. Clearly, one of those is increased war propaganda, which uses information as a further weapon in armed conflict.

I recall that two years ago, before the fall of the then-President of Libya, Al-Qadhafi, a number of international news networks were transmitting images of the arrival of the then-rebels in Tripoli's Green Square. Soon afterwards, we learned that it had all been staged, as if on a film set, and then broadcast by a number of television networks. That type of war propaganda — using journalism as an instrument — is also one of the factors putting the lives of journalists and media personnel at risk.

The second factor involves something mentioned today by the representative of Argentina, namely, the difficult, precarious working conditions in which many journalists are forced to carry out their tasks, putting their lives at risk. However, it also involves the economic interests behind the major global communications networks that, in many instances, are linked to one of the parties to a given armed conflict. Rather than being objective, neutral and impartial, they become a part of the conflict, distorting reality and thereby putting journalists at risk.

The third aspect I would like to mention in terms of danger to the lives of journalists has already been touched on by my colleagues from Brazil and Ecuador and relates to a decision made by the Common Market of the South that clearly condemns the massive surveillance discovered worldwide in recent weeks. Such espionage can also put journalists at risk, in that their sources might be exposed; while it also endangers their physical well-being and their work as journalists.

We fully agree with the need for the United Nations to work to develop institutional structures to ensure global governance of digital communication networks, which, unfortunately, at the moment, reside either in private hands or under the control of a handfull of States.

Addressing the protection of journalists surely involves the freedom of expression, which is recognized under international law and by the vast majority of the constitutions of the States Members of the United Nations. But beyond freedom of expression there is also freedom of the press, both of which concern journalists and media professionals. However, those freedoms also entail a fundamental counter-weight, which is the right of societies to communicate and to receive information. That right must therefore also be considered and protected.

Recent months have proved that the flow of information, which has revealed to the global public the existence of massive, systematic and broad-reaching spying networks, has exposed a situation that not only endangers journalists or those providing information, but that also threatens Heads of State members of the United Nations. The arrogance of some has reached such a level that it risks not only the lives of journalists, but beyond that, the life of a Head of State — as in the case of President Evo Morales Ayma. Some countries denied him the right to overfly their airspace, while others allowed him to do so on the condition that the presidential plane, which, as everyone knows, enjoys both immunity and inviolability, be inspected.

All of those issues are intimately related, forming part of the same design. In that sense, we believe that it is important, on the stage of the United Nations, to debate on equal footing those topics related to strengthening democracy, international governance and, indeed, the Organization itself.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, focusing on protection of journalists. We are grateful for the first-hand insights in the briefings by media practitioners from the NBC News, the AP, the AFP and *The Guardian*.

Uganda welcomes the concerted efforts by the Security Council and various actors at the national, regional and international levels aimed at ensuring more effective protection for civilians in armed conflict. Nevertheless, the fact that civilians still account for the vast majority of casualties in such situations shows that a lot remains to be done.

While in many cases the warning signs of threats to civilians are detected in good time, they are often not acted upon promptly, due to a number of factors, including political sensitivities and lack of adequate capacity. We therefore underscore the necessity for redoubling collective action towards preventing conflicts, resolving them peacefully and protecting civilians, with national authorities and non-State actors bearing the primary responsibility. In that regard, the parties to armed conflict should fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to ensure the protection of affected civilians.

Turning to the specific issue of the protection of journalists, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Protocols additional to the Conventions and other relevant instruments provide a solid foundation for the protection of civilians, including journalists, in situations of armed conflict. Article 79 of Additional Protocol I in particular provides that journalists are entitled to all the rights and protections afforded to civilians in armed conflicts.

The briefings we heard today put in sharp focus the dangers that journalists covering conflicts often face, including violent attacks, arrests, detention and, in extreme cases, death. Indeed, this issue deserves serious attention, given that, over the past 10 years, nearly to 1,000 journalists have lost their lives, including an estimated 121 killed in 2012.

We recognize the important role that journalists play in drawing the attention of the national, regional and international communities to the impact of conflict situations through their reports, which, in the digital age, can be received in real time. Many journalists carry out their responsibility with professionalism and objectivity. However, there have also been cases of journalists working with some media outlets whose reports appear to take positions that favour one side of a conflict, as well as incidents of others who engage in activities incompatible with their status, including espionage.

The work of journalists can be fraught with risks, especially if they report from one side of a conflict and are accused by the other of collaborating with the enemy. While embedded journalists may gain exclusive access to frontline reporting, they may also jeopardize their status as civilians.

It is therefore important to take into account all those and other factors vis-à-vis the role and responsibilities of journalists working in conflict situations in order to devise more effective strategies for their protection.

In conclusion, we welcome the adoption, in April 2012, of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, and look forward to its implementation in cooperation with Governments, media outlets, professional associations and other stakeholders. Those efforts, which complement resolution 1738 (2006), should be underpinned by enhanced awareness of and respect for existing international instruments and conventions, and with regard to emerging threats to journalists in conflict, especially those posed by non-State actors, and should be accompanied by practical guidance on the safety of journalists.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this very timely debate.

It has been seven years since the adoption of the landmark resolution 1738 (2006), which identifies the issue of the protection of journalists in armed conflict as a matter of international peace and security. Unfortunately, recent statistics indicate that journalists and media workers in armed conflict continue to be killed, tortured, detained, targeted, wounded, harassed and kidnapped.

The stories, personal experiences and images brought to us by journalists from the frontlines serve to remind us all of the human consequences of conflict. They help us remember that protecting international peace and security is a crucially important task that affects the lives, livelihoods and future of millions of civilians suffering in war. Journalists help expose illegal and inhuman practices in conflicts and bring suffering and abuse to light. They help the international community by providing crucial facts in their effort to prevent conflict and influence world opinion.

The important and honourable work of journalists and media workers is often undertaken in the most dangerous circumstances. Their vital functions increase their vulnerability, and they are sometimes deliberately targeted for their reporting.

The most recent example is the Syrian crisis. Turkey, as a neighboring country, has become a hub hosting journalists on their way to cover the conflict in Syria, and does its best to help media workers conduct their professional duties and facilitate their passage to and from Syria. Turkey also does its utmost to grant access to journalists wishing to report on Syrian camps in Turkey, helping them acquire the necessary permission and providing them with informative briefings. Since 2011, 406 delegations of foreign journalists have been received in the public areas of the camps, where they have been allowed to film and conduct interviews. In addition, Turkey has extended a helping hand to domestic and foreign journalists who

have been kidnapped or wounded, most recently in Syria and Libya.

I would like to note that legal and administrative gaps persist in addressing the issue of the protection of journalists at the national and international levels, along with problems related to implementation and enforcement.

Turkey expresses its appreciation for all efforts undertaken by the United Nations and its agencies in this area and commends the Security Council for keeping the issue on its agenda. I would also like to take this opportunity to stress that a sustainable solution to the protection of civilians and journalists can be achieved only through conflict prevention. It is the duty and responsibility of the international community to act collectively and decisively to that end.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.